UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
40th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 25 November 1992
at 11.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ELARABY (Egypt)

CONTENTS

- General debate, consideration of and action on draft resolutions on the Question of Antarctica
- Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session
- Conclusion of the Committee's work

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

92-62016 3231V (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/47/PV.40
8 January 1993

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 66 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Mrs. LAOSE-AJAYI (Nigeria): My delegation is concerned about the fact that since the thirty-eighth session, in 1983, when the question of Antarctica was first brought before the United Nations General Assembly, consensus has eluded us, in spite of the shared objective of the preservation of Antarctica as an international scientific laboratory for peaceful research.

The General Assembly has shown realism and objectivity in its call for United Nations-coordinated activity in Antarctica. To prevent the door to dialogue from being closed, it has avoided condemning the attitude of the States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. Yet the old norms of exclusiveness, discrimination and secrecy in the administration of Antarctica have persisted, as have uncoordinated and badly monitored activities and the proliferation of national scientific research bases. Clearly, this attitude does not augur well for the unique environment of Antarctica, to the protection of which the Treaty Parties say they are committed.

It is necessary to recognize the eligibility of the United Nations and the expertise at the disposal of the Organization to manage Antarctica by coordinating international cooperation in that continent. An internationally coordinated scientific research station - or stations - would not only avoid the duplication of research but also make possible the drawing up of research priorities. Most of all, it would reduce to the minimum the environmental pollution and degradation resulting from human presence in and around Antarctica.

(Mrs. Laose-Ajayi, Nigeria)

As a result of discussion of the question of Antarctica at the United Nations General Assembly, the increase that has occurred in less than 10 years in the level of international awareness of and interest in Antarctica and its importance to understanding of the global environment is more than triple that which it was between 1959 and 1983 - a period of more than 20 years.

My delegation sees the reference in Agenda 21 - the concluding document of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 - as recognition of the need for concerted international action to protect Antarctica. That recognition should be translated into a move towards consensus in this forum on the question of Antarctica.

To fulfil the relevant recommendation in Agenda 21, the Antarctic Treaty Parties should remove the current two-tier system and extend invitations to scientists in developing countries to participate in the annual seminars and symposia that are to be organized. They should establish databases and, following a practice that has been adopted repeatedly in earlier resolutions, invite the Secretary-General or his representative to their future meetings.

The Nigerian delegation wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the state of the environment in Antarctica, and to the United Nations Secretariat, including the Department of Public Information, for the background information on Antarctica that it compiled.

Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka): We are about to complete nearly a decade of consideration by the United Nations of the question of Antarctica. This coincides with a threshold transition for the United Nations - a transition denoting democratization, revitalization and a true spirit of multilateralism, enabling countries to respond in partnership to global concerns. My

(Mr. Sikkander, Sri Lanka)

delegation hopes that these sentiments will manifest themselves in regard to the question of Antarctica as well. From the outset, we have joined other, like-minded countries in addressing this issue at the United Nations with a view to developing consensus that would involve the international community in sharing and caring for that almost-pristine environment, which is described as the last wilderness on Earth.

Even at the height of the cold war, Antarctica was spared nuclear and other strategic confrontations. At a time when new global partnerships are being built for the purpose of grappling with environmental problems of unprecedented magnitude, it is of more than symbolic value that broad-based international cooperation in scientific research and preservation should be the basis for our endeavours in Antarctica.

(Mr. Sikkander, Sri Lanka)

My own delegation and others have spoken at length on the singular importance of Antarctica's role in the global environmental equation. The fragility and complexity of Antarctica are widely known. Its unique characteristics as both a repository of climatic and atmospheric history and a reservoir of frozen water which may represent a potential danger triggered by possible climatic change are well recognized. There has been growing concern over the adverse effects that human activities can have on this irreplaceable scientific storehouse. These effects could be aggravated by the pursuit of wealth at the expense of scientific research in Antarctica. Perhaps a better illustration of this dilemma lies in the irony that Antarctica, which is described as one of the Earth's refrigerators, has become the first visible victim of the man-made refrigeration industry. The use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the refrigeration industry is now known to be a main reason for world-wide ozone depletion, including the so-called ozone hole over Antarctica.

The objective of the delegations which have consistently advocated a broad-based multilateral framework within the United Nations for participation in Antarctic endeavours has been to ensure that this storehouse of information on global climatic and atmospheric systems is universally shared. We therefore welcome the fact that after nearly 10 years, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, the most representative global forum on environment ever held, the desirability of this principle was acknowledged. This recognition has also coincided with a resurgent multilateralism in the United Nations system for addressing and responding to the issues of common global concern. We therefore look forward to a qualitative change in attitudes towards the globalization of the existing Treaty regime for Antarctica. That would enable the United Nations to have a

(Mr. Sikkander, Sri Lanka)

more active role in facilitating wider scientific literacy and participation in the consultative process related to Antarctica.

We are happy to note that our efforts have not been in vain. Some positive developments have taken place. We welcome the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to submit to the Secretary-General the report of their Sixteenth Consultative Meeting. Equally welcome is the ban, albeit on a temporary basis, on exploration and mining agreed to in the 1991 Madrid Protocol. We commend the Department of Public Information for steps taken to issue information material on Antarctica. It is hoped that in this practice it will continue drawing on information submitted by those who conduct scientific research in Antarctica.

While these positive developments are in the right direction, it is necessary to remind ourselves of some basic principles concerning any international regime applicable to Antarctica. These are self-evident in view of Antarctica's importance as both a site and an indicator of global environmental change affecting all countries. First, given the criteria for participation in the existing Antarctica regime, which are beyond the economic means of most developing countries, it is essential that the United Nations should be the vehicle for broadening the base of activities related to the global commons of Antarctica. Secondly, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties should facilitate more active involvement of relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in order to ensure multisectoral and multilateral interaction between the existing Treaty regime and the larger international community. Thirdly, opportunities should be available for researchers and scientists of developing countries to participate in scientific and research activities in Antarctica. At present developing

(Mr. Sikkander, Sri Lanka)

countries are precluded from doing so by the expensive criteria stipulated by the existing regime.

As Antarctica represents a common scientific asset in regard to which priority should be attached to research over exploitation, international cooperation through the United Nations represents the least expensive and most environmentally friendly approach to expanding the limited framework provided for by the existing system. Such a functional and democratic approach would not undermine any aspect of the existing regime. On the contrary, it would strengthen the purposes and principles relevant to the Antarctic Treaty, promote universality and ensure its compatibility with the new international partnership being envisaged in response to emerging threats to the environment.

It is in this constructive spirit that my delegation has co-sponsored the draft resolution in this Committee. While taking account of the positive developments that have taken place, the draft resolution outlines a cooperative and constructive approach for international cooperation. It also seeks to build upon the important consensus achieved at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio and would augur well for the programme of action emanating from Agenda 21.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54. I shall now call on those delegations that wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. VERGAU (Germany): On behalf of the States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty I should like to express, prior to the voting, our deep regret that, for the eighth time since 1985, a consensus on the question of Antarctica has proved elusive. The States Parties hold the view that a consensus is the only reasonable basis for dealing with the question of Antarctica in the General Assembly. This approach is based on full regard for

(Mr. Vergau, Germany)

the integrity of the Antarctic Treaty, which, for more than 30 years, has united countries active in Antarctica in a uniquely successful agreement for the peaceful use of a continent. It is, therefore, a matter of disappointment to the States Parties that the proponents of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54 persist with an approach that acknowledges only scantily the significant achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system and the pivotal role which the Treaty has played in furthering international cooperation in Antarctica. To our regret, it has again turned out to be impossible to reach a consensus.

To underscore their view that the question of Antarctica should be dealt with only on a consensus basis, most of the States Parties will not participate in the vote on the draft resolution. We appeal to all delegations not to participate in the vote.

I hereby request that the vote on the draft resolution be taken by roll-call and I request that the record of the meeting clearly indicate those States which, like my delegation, choose not to participate in the voting.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Germany has requested a roll-call vote.

Mr. CHINOY (India): I wish to explain my delegation's position on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54, "Question of Antarctica". In keeping with our consistent position as a State Party to the Antarctic Treaty, my delegation will not be participating in the vote on the draft resolution this year.

At the same time, my delegation fully supports the negotiating process under way towards the establishment of a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa. My delegation's position on the question of the continuing participation of South Africa in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties remains unchanged.

(Mr. Chinoy, India)

Had there been a separate draft resolution on this question, as in previous years, my delegation would have continued to support it, pending the attainment of a non-racial, democratic government in South Africa.

Mr. LIAO Jincheng (China) (interpretation from Chinese): I should like to take this opportunity to give the following explanation concerning draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54. The Chinese Government has always opposed the apartheid system of South Africa and supported the struggle carried out by the countries and peoples of Africa against the South African apartheid regime. Had the question of South Africa been dealt with in a separate draft resolution, as in previous years, we would have voted in favour of this draft resolution. But the question of South Africa is mentioned in only three paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54, and so our delegation will not participate in the voting on it. This does not, however, mean that there has been any change in our Government's policy of opposition to the apartheid system.

Mr. BAENA SOARES (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil wishes to explain its position regarding draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54. Brazil has consistently supported the efforts of the people of South Africa to hasten the end of apartheid and to promote the creation of a democratic, non-racial South Africa. Had the Committee, as in previous years, had a separate draft resolution concerning the participation of South Africa in the Antarctic Treaty, Brazil would have voted in favour of a draft resolution relating to the question of the participation of the Government of South Africa in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties.

Mr. RIVERO ROSARIO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Our delegation is a signatory of the Antarctic Treaty but is not in consultative status. This year we shall not participate in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54, which deals with the "Question of Antarctica". However, we should like to state that, consistent with our position - which is that we are anxious that apartheid should be abolished in South Africa and that we desire that its people should finally see an end to the practices of apartheid and see the establishment of a non-racist government without any kind of discrimination - we would have continued to support a draft resolution that was geared to those objectives, as in the past. The fact that Cuba is not participating in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54 today should not be construed to imply that there has been any change in our position in this respect.

Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation, which represents a State Party to the Antarctic Treaty, will not participate in the vote. However, like others before me, I should like to say that my delegation has not changed its position with regard to the apartheid regime in South Africa, and that if there had been a separate draft resolution on this question my delegation would have voted in favour.

Ms. CABALLERO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to join preceding speakers who have said that as Parties to the Antarctic Treaty they will not participate in the vote. My delegation will not participate either, but this should not be seen as representing any change in Colombia's traditional opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa. We would urge the parties concerned to achieve the establishment of a democratic South Africa.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54.

A roll-call vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take a roll-call vote on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54, "Question of Antarctica". The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Malaysia at the 39th meeting, on 24 November 1992, and it was sponsored by the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen. Subsequent to the issuance of document A/C.1/47/L.54, the delegation of Mauritius informed the Secretariat, on 24 November 1992, that Mauritius had decided to sign the list of sponsors of the draft resolution on behalf of all States members of the Group of African States.

A roll-call vote was taken.

Colombia, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: None

Abstaining: Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Portugal, Turkey, Venezuela

Draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.54 was adopted by 71 votes to none, with 6 abstentions.* **

---

* During the course of the roll-call vote, the following members announced that they were not participating: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

** Subsequently, the delegation of Afghanistan advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their vote or position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. AROCHA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): The Venezuelan delegation abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.47 without prejudice to our position with respect to the content of the paragraphs referring to non-participation of the racist regime of South Africa in meetings of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has now completed its work on agenda item 66.

AGENDA ITEM 63 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now proceed to take action on draft decision A/C.1/47/L.53, submitted under agenda item 63.

You will recall that in the course of consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on "New Dimensions" (A/C.1/47/7), it was suggested by many delegations that we should have a meeting of the Friends of the Chair. At that meeting it was decided that we should have a resumed meeting at which to discuss the best way to proceed with our work in the future.

You have before you draft decision A/C.1/47/L.53. I should like to correct a technical error. In subparagraph (b), the words "and also to request:" should be deleted; subparagraphs "(i)" and "(ii)" should become "(c)" and "(d)"; and after each of these should be inserted the words "To request". The former (i) and (ii) would thus read: "(c) To request the Secretary-General ..." and "(d) To request the Chairman of the First Committee ...".

(The Chairman)

This draft decision has been the subject of intensive consultations, and I would like to propose that the Committee adopt it without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft decision A/C.1/47/L.53 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on representatives wishing to explain their position on the draft decision just adopted.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): We wish to give a brief explanation of our position on this issue.

The United States was reluctant to join the consensus on this draft decision because we were unsure where this exercise might lead. Our fear is that basic principles that have served as the foundation of the disarmament process, and which have worked so well, may be tampered with. We will oppose any attempts to alter or undermine these basic principles.

The United States also believes that holding resumed meetings of the First Committee to focus on multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery is not really a very productive use of resources and time. The United States does not believe there is anything fundamentally wrong with the current machinery. The real focus should be on the substance of the issues addressed. While the United States made its views known on these matters on the margins of the First Committee, especially during the meetings of the Friends of the Chair, we would like once again to take this opportunity to reiterate our specific concerns.

The United States will oppose any attempts by the First Committee at the resumed meetings to take decisions regarding the substantive agenda and operating procedures of the Conference on Disarmanent or the Disarmament Commission, or to give the impression in any way that the First Committee has

(Mr. Watson, United States)

oversight authority over these bodies. The Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are their own masters, and any attempt from outside to dictate to them would undermine their autonomy, viability and integrity. The United States will oppose any attempts made at the resumed session to take decisions regarding the Conference on Disarmament or the Disarmament Commission by majority vote. These bodies take their decisions by consensus, and any attempt to dictate to them otherwise would severely undermine their integrity.

We believe that the timetables given in the draft decision are unrealistic and redundant, and we suggest that they be relaxed to allow Member States sufficient time to give adequate responses where such responses are appropriate. Our hope is that the one-week session will result in the continuation of the rationalization process begun in the First Committee and its extension to the Disarmament Commission and other bodies. The United States hopes that we shall have a fruitful discussion of the recent report by the Secretary-General on disarmament in the post-cold-war era, and we look forward to reviewing the views of States Members of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General has said, it is vital that all States be engaged in the process of disarmament and give practical content to pronouncements on disarmament. We share the Secretary-General's concerns and hope that the resumed meetings will give effect to them.

CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

The CHAIRMAN: The First Committee has now completed its consideration of all the agenda items allocated to it.

I call now on the Secretary of the Committee, who will make a statement.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform delegations that, with a view to facilitating the preparations involved in connection with the forthcoming vote in the General Assembly on items that were allocated to the First Committee, the secretariat of the First Committee is in the process of preparing an informal tabulation paper entitled "Reports of the First Committee", which will be distributed in due course. I should point out that this is only an informal paper. It will set out in tabulation form the corresponding numbers of the draft documents adopted in the Committee with the corresponding numbers in the Committee's reports which will be before the General Assembly when the voting takes place. It is our sincere hope that this will facilitate and expedite the work of the members of the First Committee in the plenary meetings as we proceed to that stage.

In addition, I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to conference room paper A/C.1/47/CRP.1, setting out a summary of programme budget implications of the draft resolutions and decisions adopted by the First Committee.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Mauritius, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the African Group of States.

Mr. CURE (Mauritius): It gives me great pleasure to express, on behalf of the African Group of the First Committee, our sincere appreciation for the excellent manner in which you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee have accomplished the work of this important Committee. Our thanks also go to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kheradi, and his staff for their invaluable support, and to the conference officers and interpreters. The spirit of cooperation shown throughout our deliberations is an encouragement to the Committee to continue its work in times of change even more constructively.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Venezuela, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

Mr. BIVERO (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I should like to extend to you, Sir, our gratitude and congratulations on your excellent conduct of the proceedings at this important session of the Committee. It has been a productive session, as regards both the interchange of ideas and the mandates given.

We are sure that this dynamic process will continue at our resumed meetings and we are sure that, under your leadership, the aspirations of all member States to make progress towards peace will be satisfied.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of the United Arab Emirates, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. AL-NOWAIS (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates and on behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, which we have the honour to chair this month and to extend to you our thanks and our sincere appreciation for your valuable efforts in chairing the First Committee and in leading our work to success.

In this regard, I wish also to extend our thanks and appreciation to the two Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and the Secretary of the Committee. I am particularly pleased to express our heartfelt appreciation to the members of the Secretariat for their unstinting efforts and their valuable contribution in preparing the reports and publishing and circulating the documents to member States. Thanks to them, the Committee has concluded its work in a speedy and successful manner.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Spain, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. MARTINEZ SALAZAR (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I take this opportunity to join previous speakers in extending to you, Sir, the thanks of the members of our Group for the very able and dedicated way in which you and the other officers of the Committee have guided our work.

We would also extend our thanks to the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, the Director of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretary of the Committee and other members of the Secretariat for their contribution to our work.

I should also like to thank the conference officers, interpreters and other support personnel who have helped to ensure that our work was carried out in an efficient manner.

The session has been marked by a high and close level of cooperation among delegations. This has been reflected in the desire to reach agreement on a large number of items on the agenda.

The outstanding results achieved in the search for solutions to the difficult and complex items on the agenda of the Committee are tangible proof of the moderation and professional manner with which you have guided our work.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now come to the end of the work of this year's session of the First Committee and I would like to make a brief statement.

(spoke in Arabic)

The Committee has now concluded its work for the first part of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. May I take this opportunity to make some brief observations. We have indeed several reasons to be satisfied

(The Chairman)

this year, since the deliberations have been conducted in an unprecedented climate of good will and collaboration on the part of all member States. It is worth noting that more than 50 per cent of the draft resolutions and decisions considered by the Committee were adopted without a vote - a trend that adequately reflects positive changes taking place in the world today as well as the ability of the Committee to keep pace with such changes.

Without any doubt, several significant achievements have been made during the current session - such as, the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution on chemical weapons, transparency in armaments, and verification in all its aspects. It is most gratifying also to note that, for the first time, we have also reached agreement on issues formerly surrounded by controversy by means of merging parallel draft resolutions.

In the field of non-proliferation, we have witnessed the accession of a number of States, including nuclear-weapon States, such as China and France, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The draft resolution calling for the constitution of a preparatory committee for a conference to review the operation of the Treaty and to decide on its extension was approved by an overwhelming majority of States Parties. This enhances our hopes for a much brighter future in the years to come.

Another area of agreement, in line with the realities of the post-cold-war era, has been that of regional disarmament. A number of draft resolutions were considered and adopted by the Committee in this regard, a sign that we are moving towards a greater recognition of the valuable contribution that regional arrangements can make in terms of disarmament and international security.

(The Chairman)

By combining disarmament and international security agenda items in a single general debate, we have set what I consider to be a very useful precedent for the future work of the Committee. I am sure that most delegations would agree that, far from diminishing the importance of either disarmament or international security, the combined consideration of these two items constitutes an important step towards a more integrated and rational approach, vis à vis the proceedings of the Committee.

In the course of our deliberations this year, we had the opportunity to convene a special meeting in which the report of the Secretary-General on "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" was considered. The prompt and meaningful response of the members of the Committee to that document demonstrates a renewed sense of dynamism and commitment to the objectives of disarmament and international security.

In terms of rationalization of the work of the Committee, I am pleased to note a renewed interest in the subject, and hope that it could be translated into concrete proposals in the foreseeable future. As you are aware, this issue, together with the Secretary-General's report, have elicited enough interest on the part of the Committee, to warrant the reconvening of its meetings in March of next year. I hope that the resumed meetings of the Committee will make a significant contribution to the future work of this body and of other relevant forums dealing with arms control and disarmament.

Finally, I should like to thank all delegations for their effective participation in the First Committee's work at its forty-seventh session. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Patokallio of Finland and Mr. Suh of the Republic of Korea,

(The Chairman)

as well as to the Rapporteur, Mr. Zalesky of Poland, for their assistance and cooperation. I should like to express my thanks to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and especially to the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his assistants, for the high degree of efficiency with which they have expedited our work during the present session and enabled us to conclude it in the best possible manner.

(spoke in English)

I should also like to express my appreciation to the conference officers, the interpreters, the verbatim reporters, the press officers and all the others who have enabled the Committee to function effectively and efficiently.

It remains only for me to wish you all a very happy holiday season. Thank you all.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.